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Media Release

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Biden opposes efforts to weaken environmental protections

Attorneys General in five states voice concerns over plans to undo federal pollution regulations

Wilmington – The Attorneys General of Delaware and four other East Coast states have raised serious concerns about a proposal in Congress to undo federal regulations protecting their constituents from toxic air pollution.

Attorney General Beau Biden, along with the Attorneys General of Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts and New York, this week sent a letter to Rep. Fred Upton, Chairman of the House Energy & Commerce Committee, opposing a proposal (HJR 9) to undo regulations of toxic emissions the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implemented last September. The EPA's rules, which were imposed after Delaware and other states sued the agency in 2007 under the Clean Air Act, place limits on the cement industry's emissions of mercury and other substances harmful to humans and the environment.

"Toxic industrial air pollution poses clear medical risks to residents of neighboring states and damages precious natural resources," Biden said. "This resolution, which we strongly oppose, would reverse needed environmental protections that will dramatically reduce emissions of Mercury and other harmful pollutants and benefit the public health in Delaware and across the country."

The EPA regulations at issue target emissions of mercury and other dangerous pollutants from Portland cement plants, which are one of the largest sources of mercury air emissions in the country. Mercury released into the air ends up in bodies of waters, where it can build up in fish and shellfish, the main sources of mercury exposure to humans. Exposure to mercury can damage the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and immune system. Children and developing fetuses are at special risk, with even minute levels of mercury being linked to problems with memory, attention and language development. Mercury can also lead to reduced reproduction, slower growth and development, abnormal behavior, and even death in wildlife that eat contaminated fish.

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